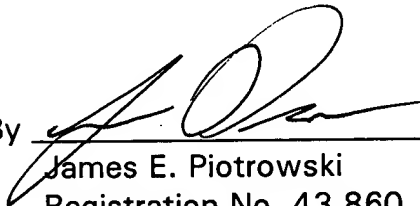


Shoketsu Kinzoku Kogyo Kabushiki Co., 56 USPQ2d 1865 (Fed. Cir. 2000). Upon entry of the amendment, claims 1-20 will be pending in the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Colin BEVERIDGE et al.

By   
James E. Piotrowski  
Registration No. 43,860  
Alix, Yale & Ristas, LLP  
Attorney For Applicant

Date: 06/22/01  
750 Main Street  
Hartford, CT 06103-2721  
(860) 527-9211  
Our Ref: DEXNON/110/PC/US  
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1. A nonwoven composite comprising a first fibrous layer in the form of a nonwoven web to which a second fibrous layer is joined by fibre entanglement and further comprising at least one textile-treating agent selected from silicones, derivatives of silicones and quaternary ammonium compounds, the treating agent comprising an active-ingredient level of at least 3% by weight of the solids in the untreated composite.

2. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the nonwoven web comprises at least one of polyester fibers, polyolefin fibers or polyamide fibres.

3. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the nonwoven web is formed by carding and subsequent needling or by hydroentanglement.

4. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the nonwoven web is spunbonded material.

5. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the basis weight of the nonwoven web is in the range of  $20 \text{ gm}^{-2}$  to  $150 \text{ gm}^{-2}$ .

6. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the second fibrous layer is formed from a pulp of cellulosic fibres.

8. A nonwoven composite according to claim 7 wherein the vegetable fibres comprise abaca, jute, sisal or a mixture thereof.

9. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the second fibrous layer is formed by an airlaying process or a wetlaying process.

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10. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the basis weight of the second fibrous layer is in the range of  $20 \text{ gm}^{-2}$  to  $70 \text{ gm}^{-2}$ .

11. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the textile-treating agent comprises at least one of a siloxane polymer, a siloxane copolymer or an organofunctional siloxane.

12. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the treating agent comprises 3 to 7% by weight of silicone relative to the total dry weight of fibres.

13. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the treating agent comprises 3.5 to 6.5% by weight of silicone relative to the total dry weight of fibres.

14. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1 wherein the treating agent comprises 4 to 5.5% by weight of silicone relative to the total dry weight of fibres.

15. A process for the production of a nonwoven composite in which a second fibrous layer is hydroentangled into a first fibrous layer that is in the form of a nonwoven web, and the entangled layers are treated with at least one textile-treating agent selected from silicones, derivatives of silicones and quaternary ammonium compounds, wherein an active-ingredient level in the treating agent amounts to at least 3% by weight of the solids in the untreated composite.

16. A process according to claim 15 for the production of a nonwoven composite wherein the treating agent comprises 3 to 7% by weight of silicone relative to the total dry weight of fibres.

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17. A nonwoven composite according to claim 1, further comprising a moulded body and a decorative facing material, wherein the nonwoven composite is disposed between the moulded body and the decorative facing material to form an article.

18. An article according to claim 17, wherein a form layer is disposed between the decorative facing material and the nonwoven composite.

19. A method of manufacturing an article in which a decorative facing material is placed within a mould, a nonwoven material is located adjacent said facing material on a side remote from a show surface of the facing material and a thermoplastic resin is introduced into a space defined by a mould wall and a surface of the nonwoven material remote from the facing material, wherein the nonwoven material comprises a nonwoven composite comprising a first fibrous layer in the form of a nonwoven web to which a second fibrous layer is joined by fibre entanglement and further comprises at least one textile-treating agent selected from silicones, derivatives of silicones and quaternary ammonium compounds, the treating agent comprising an active-ingredient level of at least 3% by weight of the solids in the untreated composite.

20. A nonwoven composite comprising a first nonwoven layer of fibers overlaid by a second nonwoven layer of fibers, at least some of the fibers of the second layer being entangled with the fibers of the first layer, the nonwoven composite further including a treating agent comprising 3 to 7% by weight of silicone relative to the total dry weight of fibres, wherein the nonwoven composite has a dry grain value within 25% of a dry grain value of the first layer by itself.